

WASHINGTON-DIRECTED ACTIVITIES



BROADCASTING BOARD OF GOVERNORS (BBG)

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FY 2014 Actual: \$733.5 million; FY 2015 Actual: \$743.9 million; FY 2016 Planned: \$749.6 million; FY 2017 Request: \$777.8 million

The Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG) is a networked global media agency. The five media organizations that comprise the BBG—the Voice of America (VOA), Office of Cuba Broadcasting (OCB), Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), Middle East Broadcasting Networks (MBN) and Radio Free Asia (RFA)—aim to complement and reinforce one another in a shared mission that is vital to U.S. national interests: to inform, engage and connect people around the world in support of freedom and democracy. Together, the BBG media organizations communicate each week with more than 226 million people across the globe, distributing programming in 59 languages to more than 100 countries via radio—shortwave, medium wave (AM), FM and satellite—as well as terrestrial and satellite TV, the web, live streaming, mobile devices and social media.

The BBG upholds freedom of expression and information as universal human rights. By exemplifying free media and free expression, the BBG helps to foster and sustain free and democratic societies worldwide. The BBG networks pursue this mission through their own media and also by working closely with media partners on the ground that bring their content into local markets, establishing valuable connections to critical institutions that aim to support civil society and promote democratic principles.

BBG broadcasters are professional journalists committed to providing accurate, credible and comprehensive news and information to audiences who lack access to the truth and are therefore susceptible to misinformation. BBG journalism is thus an antidote to censorship and extremist rhetoric, as well as a model of free media. BBG networks also offer life-saving information during humanitarian emergencies. When events dictate, they react quickly to crises with surges in broadcasting. In addition, the BBG provides internet anti-censorship tools to help audiences break through government imposed information firewalls and protect their online privacy. The networked structure of the agency ensures that the BBG media organization can deliver quality content consistent with their distinct roles in ways that are the most cost efficient for the American taxpayer, through the sharing of delivery channels, support resources and other assets.

Telling America's story and explaining U.S. foreign policy is a significant part of the BBG's mandate, as directed by Congress. In their roles under the BBG's mission, VOA and MBN—while providing comprehensive regional and world news to their audiences—cover the United States in all its complexity so that audiences in countries that are struggling to nurture or sustain their own democratic systems might see their stories reflected in the U.S. RFE/RL, RFA and OCB meanwhile act as surrogate broadcasters, providing access to reliable and accurate regional and local news in countries where media is repressed.

PROGRESS IN 2015-2016: In fiscal year 2015, the board hired a CEO to manage day-to-day operations of the BBG and networks. This move provides an opportunity for dedicated, full-time leadership and greater coordination and cooperation among the BBG networks, a priority of the Board and CEO in this current environment of increased media competition and decreasing budgets.

The BBG established the U.S. International Media (USIM) Coordinating Committee to enhance strategic cooperation among the BBG networks and will use this as a vehicle for future collaboration. The agency is focused on several key growth based priorities:

- Accelerate a dramatic shift to digital and social media;
- Concentrate its focus on key foreign policy priority audiences and geographic areas (ISIL and Violent Extremism, Russia and the Russian Periphery, China, Iran, Cuba);
- Enhance strategic cooperation across the BBG's five independent networks;
- Curate, commission and acquire external content;
- Better measure impact and hold themselves accountable for success.

FY 2015 BUDGET

INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING BUREAU (IBB)

FY 2015 Actual: \$61.3 million with 202 employees

The International Broadcasting Bureau (IBB) is comprised of the Offices of the General Counsel; Chief Financial Officer; Communications and External Affairs; Strategy and

Development; Digital and Design Innovation; Performance Review; Research and Assessment; Contracts; Human Resources; Civil Rights; Policy; Security; and Technology, Services, and Innovation. These offices support BBG operations, providing the following functions, among others: researching the reach and impact of broadcast content;

creating digital media platforms and undertaking other digital media initiatives; strategic planning; marketing content to overseas partner stations; providing financial services, such as payroll and invoice payment; awarding and administering contracts; supporting personnel; conducting relations with Congress, the media, and other interests; and ensuring physical security.

TECHNOLOGY, SERVICES AND INNOVATION (TSI)

FY 2015 Actual: \$180.6 million with 400 employees

The IBB's Office of Technology, Services and Innovation (TSI) manages a broad range of technical and infrastructure functions, including 1) delivering program content for all BBG networks through a global system of transmitting sites and an extensive system of leased satellite and fiber optic circuits and 2) providing information technology support to offices throughout the agency. TSI strives to distribute BBG content in the most cost-effective and efficient manner possible. It manages more than 90 transmitting sites worldwide that deliver shortwave, medium wave, FM and TV broadcasts. TSI also leases broadcast time at 12 transmitting sites in 11 countries.

BROADCASTING CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

FY 2015 Actual: \$8 million with no employees

Broadcasting Capital Improvements (BCI) provides funding for large-scale capital projects and for improvements to and maintenance of the BBG's global transmission network and digital multimedia infrastructure. The Office of Technology, Services and Innovation (TSI) manages many of the BCI projects in the IBB. The BCI account also supports capital projects managed by the IBB Office of Security, VOA Television and the Office of Cuba Broadcasting.

VOICE OF AMERICA

FY 2015 Actual: \$210.4 million with 1,087 employees

Languages: 45; Countries: 100+

Affiliates: 2,350 stations; TV Programs: 70+; Radio Programs: 200+

VOA is the largest of the BBG's networks. It aims to provide a forum for open debate and an opportunity to question newsmakers and U.S. officials through call-in shows and web interactives. The legally mandated charter, which guides its programs, requires that news be accurate, objective and comprehensive. In features or editorials, it aims to project the U.S. vantage point. From its Washington, D.C. headquarters, VOA produces more than 70 television shows and more than 200 radio programs. Individual language services maintain their own websites, mobile platforms and social media sites. VOA reaches a significant

part of its audience on affiliate stations that re-broadcast its programs or receive live updates from VOA reporters. This affiliate network now includes more than 2,000 individual stations.

40 Language Services*: \$139.439 million

- **VOA Africa Division (9 Services):** \$16.655 million (\$18.727 million with program delivery)
- **VOA East Asia & Pacific Division (10 Services):** \$36.168 million (\$40.480 million with program delivery)
- **VOA Eurasia Division (9 Services):** \$11.885 million (\$11.885 million with program delivery)
- **VOA Latin America Division (2 Services):** \$5.063 million (\$5.063 million with program delivery)
- **VOA South Asia Division (8 Services):** \$22.403 million (\$25.670 million with program delivery)
- **VOA Persian Division (1 Service):** \$13.956 million (\$19.107 million with program delivery)
- **VOA English Division (1 Service):** \$16.791 million (\$18.507 million with program delivery)

*See Africa, East Asia & Pacific, Europe & Eurasia, Near East Asia, South & Central Asia, and Western Hemisphere chapters for descriptions of services.

MIDDLE EAST BROADCASTING NETWORK (MBN)

FY 2015 Actual: \$109.4 million with 814 employees

Language: 1; Countries: 22

MBN is a non-profit news organization that operates Alhurra Television, Alhurra Iraq Television, Radio Sawa, and Afia Darfur. The networks aim to provide objective and relevant news and information about the United States, the region and the world to 22 Arabic-speaking countries. MBN works to support democratic values by providing ideas and opinions and an open forum for exchange.

Alhurra, Alhurra Iraq, Radio Sawa, MBN Digital, Afia Darfur Total*: \$44.029 million (\$55.964 million with program delivery)

*See Near East Asia Region chapter for descriptions of services.

RADIO FREE EUROPE/RADIO LIBERTY (RFE/RL)

FY 2015 Actual: \$103.9 million with 571 employees

Languages: 28; Countries: 23

RFE/RL reports to audiences in countries where the media is not free or only partially free. Its programming focuses on local and regional developments in places where government intimidation, censorship, economic hardship, ethnic and religious intolerance, violent extremism and other threats remain; and where independent journalists often face great risk. This includes Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Ukraine and Russia. RFE/RL journalists aim to provide uncensored news and open debate. On August 1, 2015 Radio Free Iraq was merged with MBN's Radio Sawa Iraq service. Note: In 2016, RFE/RL closed the Avar and Circassian language services, reducing the amount of languages to 26.

Nineteen Language Services Total*: \$62.918 million (\$69.585 million with program delivery)

*See Europe & Eurasia, Near East Asia, and the South & Central Asia region chapters for descriptions of services.

RADIO FREE ASIA (RFA)

FY 2015 Actual: \$35.70 million with 264 employees, plus \$6.531 million for the Open Technology Fund for a total of \$42.230 million.

Languages: 9; Countries: 6

Radio Free Asia delivers uncensored, fact-based news and information to citizens living in China, Vietnam, North Korea, Laos, Cambodia and Burma (Myanmar). These countries are known for limiting and restricting access to media. It reports on local developments and issues often ignored by state-controlled media, such as official corruption, forced confiscation of land, labor standoffs, ethnic unrest, religious persecution, environmental hazards, human trafficking, health risks and human rights abuses. RFA uses social and other digital media to deliver content to its audiences and takes advantage of growing digital formats and trends such as e-books, producing multimedia publications available for download and geared toward mobile devices and tablets. Its investigative reporting on human

trafficking, food safety and the environment has recently won awards from the Hong Kong Journalists Association, Amnesty International, and the Society of Environmental Journalists.

Service costs may include related foreign operations and/or transmission costs where appropriate. Transmission costs are especially expensive for RFA as its content cannot be broadcast from low-cost U.S. government-owned and operated facilities in third countries where host countries are unwilling to risk antagonizing China. Using leased facilities drives higher transmission costs per hour.

Nine Language Services Total*: \$23.988 million (\$29.414 million with program delivery)

*See East Asia & Pacific region chapter for descriptions of services.

OFFICE OF CUBA BROADCASTING (OCB)

FY2015 Actual: \$29.918 million with 130 employees

Language: 1; Country: 1

OCB, through Radio and TV Marti and martinoticias.com, aims to deliver a multimedia service of professional news and information to Cuba. The Marti's aim to inform and engage the people of Cuba by providing credible news and information, and encouraging freedom and democracy through programs that focus on human rights, individual freedoms, entrepreneurship and self-sustainability. OCB uses shortwave, medium wave, direct-to-home satellite, satellite radio, internet, social media, flash drives and DVDs to help reach audiences in Cuba. Marti has changed its digital strategy to embrace a social media-first approach since both Marti's Facebook and YouTube accounts are accessible from Cuba. During its coverage of President Obama's visit to Cuba, this approach allowed Marti to obtain three times more engagement than any other market players such as El Nuevo Herald, Granma or Cubadebate.

*See Western Hemisphere region chapter for additional information on OCB.

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

FY 2014 Actual – \$7.322 million; FY 2015 Actual \$5.85 million

The BBG has been an interagency leader in measurement and evaluation. While the Agency's mission to "inform, engage and connect people around the world in support of freedom and democracy" is distinct from State Department public diplomacy activities in the sense that it does not aim to change attitudes regarding the U.S. or its policies, it is strategically aligned with foreign policy goals such as serving as a model of a free press and supporting its role in free, open, democratic societies, fostering

greater understanding and engaging audiences. Within the International Broadcasting Bureau, the Office of Research and Assessment (ORA) seeks to understand audiences and impact by measuring the efficacy of BBG programs in achieving their objectives in the target countries within which they operate.

Specifically, BBG research measures effectiveness in terms of audience size, program quality and reliability, whether

or not programming increases the audience's understanding of current events and American society and policies, whether audiences share the information with others, whether the information provided helps people to form opinions on important topics and many other factors. The BBG contracts with Gallup to conduct quantitative audience and market research. Gallup focuses primarily on quantitative audience research, employing a mix of surveys, focus groups, in-depth interviews and audience panels.

In February 2016, to make progress on BBG's five agency priorities, the BBG held an Impact Summit, with the goal of reviewing and advancing its impact assessment. The summit resulted in a new BBG Impact Model, which is more streamlined than the original model and more attuned to the difficulties of obtaining representative survey data in some of the BBG target markets. In fiscal year 2016, the planned budget for ORA was \$6.3 million, which is expected to increase further to \$8.6 million in fiscal year 2017.

COUNTER-CENSORSHIP EFFORTS AND RFA'S OPEN TECHNOLOGY FUND

Seeking to exemplify a free press and help foster and sustain free and democratic societies means having to counter governments who are actively seeking to disrupt them. Censorship denies international media the right to broadcast on radio and television, through interference with or jamming of shortwave radio or satellite broadcasts in violation of multiple international agreements, blocking citizens from accessing websites and other actions.

The BBG works to counter censorship through a variety of technical and political channels, and promotes the rights of people worldwide to seek and receive information on all media platforms. These initiatives include monitoring

internet censorship in over 70 locations worldwide, integrating censorship circumvention technologies directly into mobile applications and deploying a mobile application to secure online communications for users in Iran. Radio Free Asia's Open Technology Fund (OTF), opentechfund.org, which is funded by the BBG, also supports projects that create open and accessible technologies promoting human rights and open societies. In addition, the BBG partners with other international broadcasters and organizations to combat the deliberate interference with satellite broadcasting signals that silence independent media and prevent free access to information.

BBG ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

